

**Amendments to the Claims**

Please amend claim 1. Please cancel claims 10-20. Please add new claims 21-31. The currently pending claims as amended appear below.

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method of automating contributions in a gaming system, said  
 2 method comprising:  
 3 (a) prompting a user with a gaming option in an automated gaming system;  
 4 (b) enabling the user to optionally pledge a contribution to an organization, said pledge  
 5 being contingent on a result of said gaming option, said pledge being input to said automated  
 6 gaming system;  
 7 (c) permitting the user to make a wager and partake in the gaming option in said  
 8 automated gaming system, said automated gaming system determining said result using said  
 9 wager and gaming option;  
 10 (d) automatically presenting said result to said user from said automated gaming system,  
 11 said step (d) being performed after said step (b); and  
 12 (e) automatically making the contribution to the organization based on the pledge of  
 13 step (b) and ~~the results of step (c)~~ said result.

1 2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) further comprises allowing the user to  
 2 select the organization.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) further comprises allowing the user to  
 2 select a size of the contribution.

1 4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the gaming option has a first odds of winning  
 2 in step (a), and a second odds of winning based on the pledge of step (b).

1 5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein an odds of winning the gaming option is  
2 related to the pledge of step (b).

1 6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the gaming option has a first payout in step (a),  
2 and a second payout based on the pledge of step (b).

a 1 7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein a payout for winning the gaming option is  
2 related to the pledge of step (b).

1 8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of accumulating  
2 contributions for the user during a series of gaming activities.

B 1 9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of automatically providing  
2 information regarding the gaming option and the contribution to the Internal Revenue Service.

10-20. (Cancelled)

21. (New) An automated gaming apparatus, comprising:

- at least one user input device which receives input selections from a user;
- at least one user output device which provides information to said user;
- a controller coupled to said at least one user input device and said at least one user output device, said controller controlling the operation of said automated gaming apparatus, said controller executing the steps comprising:
  - receiving a selection from a user using said at least one user input device to engage in a gaming activity;
  - allowing said user to make an optional user pledge to an organization using said at least one user input device, said user pledge being contingent on a result of said gaming activity;
  - determining user proceeds of said gaming activity based on said result;
  - presenting said result of said gaming activity to said user at said at least one user output device, said presenting step being performed after said step of allowing a user to make an optional user pledge;
  - if a user makes said optional user pledge, determining whether said result satisfies the contingency of said user pledge; and
  - if a user makes said optional user pledge and if said result of said gaming activity satisfies the contingency of said optional user pledge, reducing said user proceeds by an amount of said user pledge, and crediting said organization with said amount of said user pledge.

22. (New) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said controller further executes the step of:

- interactively prompting said user to make said optional user pledge to an organization using said at least one user output device, said step of interactively prompting being performed before said step of presenting said result of said gaming activity.

1 23. (New) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said controller further executes the  
2 step of:  
3 automatically determining said result based on a random process.

1 24. (New) The gaming apparatus of claim 23, wherein at least one of (a) a probability that  
2 said result will be favorable to said user, and (b) the amount of said user proceeds in the event  
3 said result is favorable to said user, are dependent on whether said user makes said optional user  
4 pledge.

1 25. (New) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said step of allowing said user to make  
2 an optional user pledge comprises allowing said user to select an organization to receive said  
3 pledge.

1 26. (New) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said controller further executes the  
2 step of:  
3 automatically providing information regarding said user proceeds and the amount credited  
4 to said organization to the Internal Revenue Service.

1 27. (New) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said at least one user output device and  
2 said at least one user input device comprises an interactive visual display terminal.

1 28. (New) A program product for use in an automated gaming apparatus, comprising:  
2 a plurality of processor-executable instructions recorded on signal-bearing media, wherein  
3 said instructions, when executed by at least one processor of said automated gaming apparatus,  
4 cause the apparatus to perform the steps comprising:  
5 receiving a selection from a user to engage in a gaming activity;  
6 allowing said user to make an optional user pledge to an organization using, said user  
7 pledge being contingent on a result of said gaming activity;  
8 determining user proceeds of said gaming activity based on said result;  
9 presenting said result of said gaming activity to said user at said at least one user output  
10 device, said presenting step being performed after said step of allowing a user to make an optional  
11 user pledge;  
12 if a user makes said optional user pledge, determining whether said result satisfies the  
13 contingency of said user pledge; and  
14 if a user makes said optional user pledge and if said result of said gaming activity satisfies  
15 the contingency of said optional user pledge, reducing said user proceeds by an amount of said  
16 user pledge, and crediting said organization with said amount of said user pledge.

1 29. (New) The program product of claim 28, wherein said instructions further cause said  
2 apparatus to perform the step of:  
3 interactively prompting said user to make said optional user pledge to an organization  
4 using an interactive display device, said step of interactively prompting being performed before  
5 said step of presenting said result of said gaming activity.

1 30. (New) The program product claim 28, wherein said instructions further cause said  
2 apparatus to perform the step of:  
3 automatically determining said result based on a random process;  
4 wherein at least one of (a) a probability that said result will be favorable to said user, and  
5 (b) the amount of said user proceeds in the event said result is favorable to said user, are  
6 dependent on whether said user makes said optional user pledge.

31. (New) The program product of claim 28, wherein said instructions further cause said  
apparatus to perform the step of:  
automatically providing information regarding said user proceeds and the amount credited  
to said organization to the Internal Revenue Service.